

# Appendix B

The application of multiple fans in a common system, in part, provided the impetus of the design of the "plug" fan years ago. CLEANPAK International has incorporated multiple fans in common cabinets for several years to provide systems that require redundancy, to meet architectural profile requirements, and for space savings. The arrangements may be vertical up or down flow or horizontal. The notes below apply generally, but often relate to redundancy issues, which is a benefit of multiple fan operation whether a design requirement or not.

## General

There are three general arrangements for multiple plenum fan configurations as noted below. Each arrangement has its benefits.

**1+1:** 2 fans can be provided in a cabinet with either fan capable of supplying 100% of the design flow requirement. This would provide 100% redundancy. Normal operation can be simultaneous or independent.

**Twin:** 2 fans can be provided in a cabinet with both fans required for the design flow. This arrangement provides capacity in excess of 50% if a single fan fails, since the system pressure drop falls by the square root of the volume decrease. Additional capacity can be provided by ramping the VFD up to the limit of the motor full load amps. Normal operation is always simultaneous.

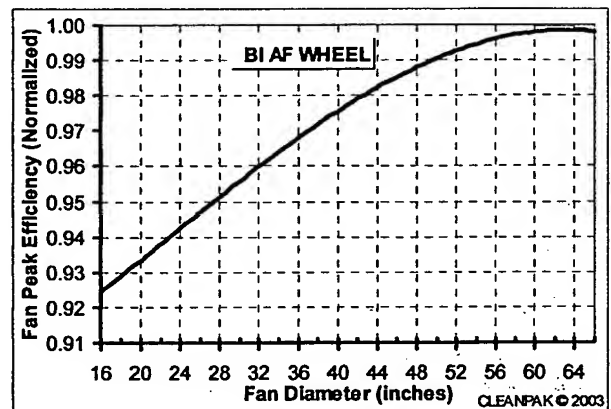
**Xn+1:** This system provides a measure of redundancy by providing a number of fans smaller than that required by the 1+1 arrangement. The failure of a single fan is accommodated by the initiation of an unused fan, or the ramp up of all remaining fans. The number of fans can be as high as 12-18, although it is not limited. Normal operation is always simultaneous.

## Airflow Isolation

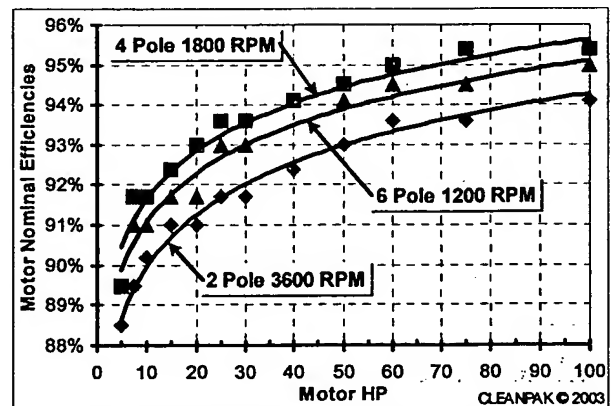
- Inlet or discharge isolation dampers with a solid dividing wall can be provided for fan service of an inoperative fan while operating at design flow for the 1+1 system. The damper pressure drop should be included in the calculation of the total static pressure (TSP).
- An Econo-Disk® may be provided for manual or automatic fan isolation for any of the applications, although as the fans become smaller (18" and under) performance penalties may result. Econo-Disk shutoff characteristics are excellent.
- Inlet isolation dampers can be provided and function similar to, but not as efficiently as, the Econo-Disk. Back draft dampers (heavy duty) can be used but may provide unstable operation at low flows. The damper pressure drop should be included in TSP calculations.
- If some sort of fan isolation is not provided, system performance will suffer a dramatic decrease with a fan failure, due to back flow through the failed fan.

## Efficiency

- Larger diameter fans have significantly higher peak efficiencies than smaller diameter fans. Selecting fans at optimum efficiency for an operating point requires the ability to vary wheel width and operating speed.
- Larger motors are significantly more efficient than smaller motors.
- Motors operated at 75% full load are slightly more efficient than those that operate at 100% full load.



Fan efficiencies are generally higher for larger size fans



Motor efficiencies are higher for larger size motors

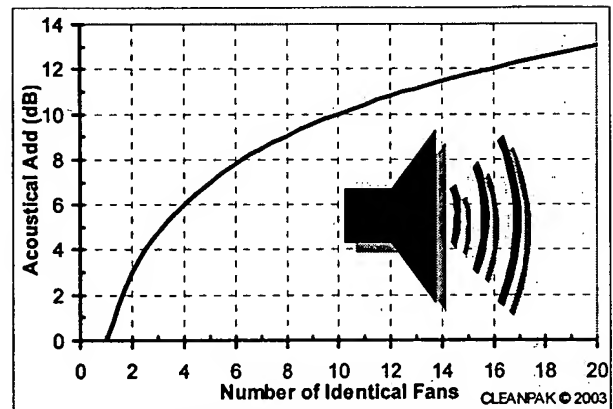
- System efficiency can be improved with internal and external pressure loss reductions such as low velocity coils and high capacity filters.

**Dimensions**

- For 1+1 systems, inlet and discharge plenum lengths may depend on the normal operating condition. Multiple fan configurations allow for more even velocity profiles for any given length than a single fan configuration.
- Larger fans take more airway length than smaller fans. Service access behind fans is similar for both large and small fans.
- Isolation dampers on the fan inlet increase the airway length.
- Isolation dampers on the fan outlet increase the airway length.
- Large numbers of fans operating as in  $X_n+1$  can reduce the airway length compared to the 1+1 arrangement, particularly if the 1+1 design has an independent operating design rather than a simultaneous operating design.
- Unusual profiles may be accommodated with larger numbers of fans ( $X_n+1$ ).

**Pressure/Volume Control**

- VFDs work well when the system follows the fan laws but do not work well if volume varies but the ESP is high and constant, or the fans operate with multiple volumes and constant pressure.
- The Econo-Disk can be used to provide volume control while maintaining design pressure with the simultaneous operation described in 1+1.
- Econo-Disks can be used for both volume and pressure control with manual, pneumatic, or electric actuation.
- Econo-Disks can be used with VFDs for increased flexibility and efficiency.
- Multiple fans such as  $X_n+1$  can be staged and manipulated with VFDs and isolation dampers to offer constant pressure with variable volume.
- Multiple, simultaneous operating fans are generally operated at the same speed.
- Inlet isolation dampers can be used for volume control by "riding the curve" although this is not recommended since it is an inefficient method and may result in unstable operation.

**Sound**

- Manufacturers' bare fan sound levels should be adjusted for multiple fan operation. Sound power levels are 11dB higher for 12 fans operating than for only one of the twelve.
- Smaller fans operate at higher speeds than larger fans for any given pressure. This shifts the primary tone of the fan (or blade passage frequency) to higher frequencies and may shift it to a higher octave band. Generally speaking this is advantageous in that higher frequencies are typically attenuated more easily.
- There is a potential for acoustical beats to arise with multiple fan systems.

**Vibration Isolation**

- 1+1 and twin fan operations are usually internally spring isolated.
- $X_n+1$  systems with stacked fans, racked, are usually provided without internal isolation, but can be internally spring isolated.

**Service**

- Smaller fans and motors are easier to physically manipulate than large fans and motors.



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- Larger numbers of fans, motors, VFDs, dampers, and damper actuators increase service requirements and increase the potential points of failure.
- Generally a fan will be isolated until a system shutdown for major service, or if the fans are screened service is performed while one or more fans are operating.
- Service in an active air stream, without pressure and flow interference can be performed most easily with an airlock.
- Taperlock fan hubs offer quicker and simpler motor/fan wheel replacements than straight bore hubs.
- Bearing life is unaffected by the number of fans operating (1+1 or  $X_{n+1}$ ), as the fewer fans use larger motors and bearings and operate at slower speeds.
- Aluminum wheels reduce the bearing load.
- Spare parts are less costly for small fans compared to larger fans.

### Electrical

- 100% redundancy systems (1+1) require greater electrical service requirements than other systems but are as efficient or more efficient during operation.
- If single VFDs are used to run multiple motors, each motor requires separate overload protection. VFD to motor lead length is the sum of all the lead lengths fed by a single VFD.
- Multiple VFDs reduce the need for VFD bypass options.

### Initial Cost

- \$/CFM are lower for larger fans.
- \$/HP are lower for larger motors and VFDs.
- Cabinet costs may be reduced with  $X_{n+1}$  systems, due to the reduced cabinet length.

In the application of multiple smaller fans, one should consider several factors that affect initial cost, operating efficiency, redundancy, and reliability. The discussion above should help the designer evaluate the various options. Optimizing for single or multiple fan applications calls for flexibility from the air handling unit manufacturer. Please contact CLEANPAK's technical staff for further information and assistance with your application.